

Carlisle School Committee
Minutes
April 2, 2008
Ruth C. Wilkins Library, Robbins Building
7:00 PM

Present – School Committee: Nicole Burkel, Chair; Wendell Sykes, Vice Chair; Dale Ryder; Chad Koski.

Present – School Administration: Marie Doyle, Superintendent; Heidi Zimmerman, Business Manager; Jim Halliday, Principal; Patrice Hurley, Principal; Karen Slack, Director of Student Support Services; Claire Wilcox, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Nicole Burkel called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Public Comment Period

Ms. Burkel welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Boy Scout troop 135 and the teachers present, and asked if any members of the public had comments.

Philip Drew of Bedford Road stated that he was at the meeting for the facility fee discussion representing the Savoyard Light Opera Company.

Cynthia Sorn of Rutland Street expressed a concern that the fee discussion would not be at the beginning of the meeting.

Review of minutes

Wendell Sykes made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 19, 2008. Chad Koski seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of approving the minutes.

Communications/Correspondence

The following items were reviewed:

- Thank you letter from Pagus: Africa for donations collected at the winter concerts
- Thank you letter from Sandy Kelly recognizing William Chaffin's birthday contribution to the school library
- Thank you email from Stephen Pixley, the Director of the New School of Music for the participation by several school families in a Chinese New Year program in Cambridge
- Thank you letters to Courtney Hadley and Megan Fitzharris for fine arts activities

- Thank you letter to Chiao Bin Huang for her presentation at the NE World Language Chairs seminar
- Thank you letter to Sandy Kelly for her presentation to School Committee
- Thank you letter sent to the following students in recognition of their winning a regional Gold Key in the Scholastic Writing Awards:

▪ Brendan Fay	Sarah Williams
▪ Maren Epstein	Teresa Ventura
▪ Amelia Cox	Matthew Salemy
▪ Bella Bjork	Jenny Robinson
▪ Tilly Barnett	Alison Richard
▪ Emma Frodigh	Grete Langrind
▪ Ileana Wu	Aidan Konuk
▪ Dakota Woodworth	Caroline Guild

- End of the year audit report
- MASC Publication: nomination forms and meeting notices
- Notification to school community regarding pesticide application

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Marie Doyle welcomed the Boy Scouts and reported on the following:

- Internet safety parent program
- CSA Parent Informational Coffee on bullying/student leadership and the integration of cultural studies into the curriculum
- Staff coffee
- DARE graduation
- Title I audit -- materials delivered to DOE on March 28th
- Curriculum Coordinators' meeting
- Middle School Choir at MMEA
- School Building Committee meeting and advancement of the project to the next step, that of schematic drawing
- Primary Source meeting

Administrator Reports

Jim Halliday represented the Administrative Team and reported on the following:

- Second grade Iditarod project
- Authors' breakfast in Ms. Molvig's class
- ELA MCAS testing complete
- Mentor retreat
- DARE program and graduation
- National Science Teachers Association presentation by Rob Quaden and Alan Ticotsky

- MMEA – Middle School performance
- Pre-MICCA concert

Members'/Committee Reports

Mr. Sykes reported on a recent meeting of the Building Committee at which there was considerable discussion about the Initial Certificate of Compliance.

Ms. Ryder reported that the Highland Subcommittee has been meeting twice a month and has been discussing options for the building. The committee is very concerned about not derailing the building project. Ms. Burkel asked if Ms. Ryder would be representing the School Committee on the subcommittee, and she stated that she would.

Mr. Koski stated that the regional school committee had interviewed Diana Rigby for two hours last evening and that site visits would be held to the Concord schools to follow-up.

Ms. Burkel attended an EDCO leadership meeting. There was extensive discussion about the implementation of full day kindergarten in member districts. MCAS was also discussed. She stated that the next meeting would be on May 1st to discuss technology and that a panel of speakers would be present. She urged members to attend the meeting if possible.

Information/Discussion Items

A. Math and Title I presentation. Liz Perry, math specialist and Title I math teacher reported on the highlights of the math and Title I programs for the year. She reviewed new math initiatives this year, including the following:

- Professional development sessions on vertical articulation
- Fastt Math extended to first grade in addition to second and third
- Extended time for Fastt Math to 3 times a week with the deployment of a computer cart in Spalding
- Second year of the math review committee and decision to continue to use Every Day mathematics for K - 5 and increase professional development for the program, including a summer workshop
- Grades K and 1 benchmarks have been reviewed and the report card set up to reflect the benchmarks
- Grade K and 1 assessments changed to match benchmarks
- Middle school math teachers and Ms. Perry will be attending the national math conference through a Davida Fox-Melanson grant.

Future plans include more dedicated professional development time for math to work on topics identified in the parent and teacher math survey as needing additional attention. A parent handbook may also be developed.

Ms. Burkel asked if students could work on Fastt Math at home. Ms. Perry explained that this would be possible but that the software is expensive. There are other websites that provide similar practice for students without developing a database. Mrs. Perugini, a parent in the audience, stated that she had bought the program at a cost of \$250 and that her children use it successfully.

Ms. Perry then discussed the Title I program. She noted that the school had just completed an audit of the program. She thanked Claire Wilcox and Patrice Hurley for their work on the audit.

Mr. Sykes asked Ms. Perry to explain what the Title I program is. She did this and described our program of after-school math clubs. She also holds a math games night sponsored by Title I and provides some additional help in classrooms.

Ms. Doyle thanked Ms. Perry for all her efforts.

- B. Facility Use Fee discussion.** The committee had previously discussed facility use fees as part of the process of reviewing the policy regulating use of the school property. Mr. Flannery joined the committee at the table and stated that he had invited facility users to attend the meeting tonight. He stated that he had recommended a fee schedule that would essentially double the current charges.

Mr. Flannery reviewed changes in energy costs and the maintenance department budget since the fees were originally set. He stated that the current fee schedule brings in about \$6000 per year from users in addition to custodial costs paid by user organizations.

Mr. Flannery stated that the amount organizations would pay would double under his proposed increase. He further stated that many schools are beginning to look more closely at their fees. Some towns discount fees for local groups. The Recreation Commission does not incur fees for usage of the facilities, but they do pay custodial costs if the usage is at a time that custodians are not scheduled to work. This same policy applies to all town departments, although the Rec Com is the major user on a regular basis. Ms. Burkel suggested that the School Committee should consider possible fees for use on a regular basis.

Ms. Burkel suggested that it would be better to phase in the fee increase over a few years rather than doubling it right away. Mr. Flannery stated that this had been done in the past. Ms. Burkel suggested that Ms. Zimmerman and Mr. Flannery should review Rec Com's usage and gifts in kind that had been made and discuss possible fees. Ms. Ryder stated that she felt Rec Com operates on a very small budget and that if they had to pay fees, the

programs for children would suffer. Mr. Koski disagreed and stated that Rec Com has successfully charged field usage fees and that this would be similar.

Ms. Burkel stated that she and Ms. Zimmerman, along with Mr. Flannery would meet with Holly Hamilton of the Recreation Commission regarding a mutually beneficial arrangement for use of the school facility.

Ms. Burkel further suggested that the new fee schedule be phased in over the next three years. Mr. Koski noted that the fees might not need to be increased to the proposed level if the Recreation Commission began to pay for building usage. Ms. Zimmerman responded that even with the increases, actual costs would not be covered.

Ms. Burkel asked Ms. Zimmerman to establish a methodology for determining fees. Ms. Zimmerman stated that she would work out a square footage methodology. She will back out the costs of the Wastewater Treatment Facility from the calculation.

Ms. Burkel took questions from the audience.

Mr. Drew stated that he was surprised at the amount of yearly fees because the Savoyards pay \$4500 of the \$6000 taken in yearly. In his view the Savoyards are subsidizing other users. He stated that the Savoyards had also helped with the Chinese New Year celebration and had conducted a workshop for the theater group.

Nancy Szczesniak, representing Destination Imagination and the Carlisle Chess Club asked for clarification regarding what category these clubs would fall into. Ms. Doyle responded that these groups fall under the school and are sanctioned by the school.

Doug Stevenson asked if the fee changes would affect town departments and whether town affiliated programs would incur a charge. Ms. Burkel stated that the discussion at this point only concerns revenue-generating activities.

- C. **Student Fee discussion.** Ms. Zimmerman distributed a list of existing fees and proposed fees for next year. She also distributed a spreadsheet detailing athletic fees and costs for the current year. The spreadsheet summarized sports through the winter but did not include the spring sports. She stated that her recommendation is to increase varsity and JV fees for next year with varsity increasing from \$175 to \$185 and junior varsity from \$85 to \$95. Intramural fees would remain at \$55.

One new fee is proposed for next year to fund band and choir evening rehearsals.

The pre-kindergarten fee would increase from \$4500 to \$4750, based on salary increases and participation.

Ms. Zimmerman also discussed the materials included in the packet regarding the total fees paid by families and the participation rates in the bus fees and full day kindergarten.

Ms. Ryder asked if scholarships are available if families can't afford fees. Ms. Doyle assured her that no one is denied participation because they can't pay.

Ms. Burkel asked about the affect of declining enrollment on our ability to collect the budgeted amount for fees. Ms. Zimmerman will review this. She also suggested waiting until later in the year to vote on exact fees.

Ms. Burkel asked for clarification regarding pre-school numbers and Ms. Slack reviewed the proposed pre-school enrollment for next year.

Ms. Burkel stated that the transportation fee is a significant burden for middle school families. She suggested that it might be better to spread the transportation cost over more years with a lower fee each year rather than the high fees for middle school.

Ms. Ryder asked how the Carlisle pre-school fees compare with private area pre-schools.

Ms. Zimmerman reviewed the family caps in place in response to a question from Mr. Koski.

- D. **Review Budget Mailer.** A draft of the budget mailer had been previously emailed to members. Ms. Zimmerman distributed a revised copy. She reviewed the changes since the last version and asked members to send her any input they have.
- E. **Technology Update.** Ms. Doyle handed out a report she had prepared on the school's technology and reviewed the content of the report, which addressed the current state of technology at the school. It summarized the current computers on campus and reviewed the needs for additional mobile computer carts and an eventual wireless network upgrade. The report included a timeframe for computer purchase over the next several years.

In addition to computers, the report addressed the value of electronic whiteboards and the potential addition of whiteboards for more teachers and classrooms. The report also noted the generosity of the Carlisle Education Foundation and the Carlisle School Association for their support of technology for the school.

Mr. Koski asked for more detail regarding the cost of a new wireless network. Ms. Zimmerman stated that she would ask network manager Carolynn Luby to put together a brief summary of estimated costs.

Ms. Burkel suggested adding a technology report as a regular part of the agenda, so that people are aware of the importance of technology in education today. Ms. Doyle agreed and the presentation will be posted on the school website and publicized in the *Buzz*.

- F. **CEF donation.** The Carlisle Education Foundation has donated an additional mobile computer lab and 3 electronic whiteboards. The whiteboards will be deployed in third, fourth, and fifth grades. The location of the new cart has not yet been determined. Ms. Doyle stated that we are very grateful to the Education Foundation for their continued support.

- G. **Budget.** Ms. Burkel read a statement regarding discussions between the school committee and the CTA for concessions in the teachers contract. She stated that the SC has been able to restore 4 positions without these concessions. She expressed gratitude to the teachers for their willingness to negotiate changes. Ms. Doyle added her thanks to the teachers and stated that some changes had occurred with the special education budget that had allowed the restoration of four teaching positions. She noted that several aide positions would be lost and expressed regret at losing excellent aides.

Ms. Burkel noted that all other cuts remain in the budget and that this is a bare bones budget. She noted that some things will not get done or will take much longer to get done with fewer people and that appropriate expectations will have to be set. Ms. Burkel again thanked the CTA for their gracious offer and their willingness to work on the budget.

A final budget of \$8,941,684 was presented. This represents a 1.4% increase over the budget for fiscal 2008. The increased funds include a \$25,000 transfer from free cash and a re-designation of capital funds of \$80,000 to the operating budget for next year.

- H. **Superintendent Evaluation Process.** Ms. Burkel stated that she would like the evaluation to be done at the first meeting in May. She will be distributing individual evaluation forms to members for their input.

Action Items

A. **Vote School Choice**

On March 19, 2008, at 7:00 pm in the Ruth C. Wilkins Library, the Committee held a Public Hearing on School Choice for the purpose of receiving input

from Carlisle citizens regarding the school's participation or non-participation in the state's School Choice program for the upcoming school year.

Applicable law states in part, ". . . *this obligation to enroll non-resident students shall not apply to a district for a school year in which its school committee, prior to June first, after a public hearing, adopts a resolution withdrawing from said obligation, for the school year beginning the following September.*"

Mr. Koski made a motion that the Carlisle Public Schools follow past practice and not participate in the School Choice program for the 2008-2009 school year due to space and budget restrictions. Ms. Ryder seconded the motion and all members present voted in favor.

B. Vote last day of school and graduation

Mr. Koski made a motion to set June 18, 2008 as the last day of school and the date of graduation. Mr. Sykes seconded the motion and all members present voted in favor.

C. Vote District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

Mr. Koski made a motion to approve the District Accommodation Plan presented by principal Patrice Hurley at the March 19th meeting. Ms. Ryder seconded the motion and all members present voted in favor.

D. Approve and sign Initial Compliance Certificate for MSBA

Mr. Sykes made a motion to approve the MSBA Initial Compliance Certificate as presented by Lee Storrs at the March 19th meeting. Mr. Koski seconded the motion and all members present voted in favor.

Ms. Burkel signed the document as Chair of the Committee.

E. Vote FY 09 budget.

The school budget has been discussed on numerous occasions, and the final budget was presented at this evening's meeting. **Ms. Ryder made a motion to approve a budget of \$8,941,684 for the Carlisle Public Schools for fiscal 2009. Mr. Sykes seconded the motion.**

Mr. Koski expressed a concern about approving a budget based on fees that have not yet been determined.

All members present voted in favor of the motion.

Other Business

Ms. Burkel suggested having a transition meeting with both old and new members of the School Committee. She stated that she is working on a School Committee manual and information packet.

Citizens' Comments

Mary Storrs of Brook Street stated that she would like to see more discussion of priorities for computers.

Bill Fink of Daniels Lane suggested the possibility of doing a technology fair at another school event. Ms. Storrs agreed that this could be done in the classrooms and parents invited to attend.

Don Rober of Rutland Street made a comment regarding something he had recently seen regarding a controversy regarding the teaching of math.

Doug Stevenson of the Selectmen thanked the School Committee, administration, and teachers for their work on the budget and in making the budget work without an override. Ms. Doyle added her thanks to town boards for their support and working together.

Cynthia Sorn asked for clarification regarding the vote on the CEF donation. She also asked for clarification regarding whether students who did not choose to pay a band or chorus fee could participate in MICCA.

Adjournment

There was no additional business, and **Mr. Sykes made a motion to adjourn the meeting to executive session with no intent to return to open session to discuss a complaint against a staff member. Ms. Ryder seconded the motion, and all members present voted in favor as follows: Ms. Ryder, yes; Mr. Koski, yes; Mr. Sykes, yes; Ms. Burkel, yes.**

The public meeting was adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire M. Wilcox
Assistant to the Superintendent